DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 381 895 EA 026 687

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TITLE Stop the Clock: Ending the Tyranny of Time in Education. Policy Perspectives on Time and Learning.
INSTITUTION Far West Lab. for Educational Research and Development, San Francisco, Calif.
SPONS AGENCY Office of Educational Research and Improvement (ED), Washington, DC.
PUB DATE Feb 95
NOTE 44p.
PUB TYPE Reports - Evaluative/Feasibility (142)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Costs; Efficiency; Elementary Secondary Education; *Extended School Day; *Extended School Year; Flexible Scheduling; Performance; Scheduling; Teaching Load; *Time Factors (Learning); *Time Management

ABSTRACT

This report explores key issues in the debate about restructuring educational time to enhance student learning. Its central framework was derived from proceedings of a symposium conducted in June 1994 by the Policy Support Program of the Far West Laboratory for Educational Research and Development. Part 1 describes the developments that led to the creation of the National Educational Commission on Time and Learning (NECTL) and summarizes NECTL recommendations. The second part presents key questions about the issue of time and learning and discusses the implications for policymakers. These include: (1) What are some strategies for restructuring educational time to increase or enhance time for learning? (2) How can educational time be structured so all students reach high standards? (3) How can districts and schools support teachers in expanded roles that require additional time? (4) How can districts and schools be encouraged to restructure educational time to increase the amount of time for learning? and (5) What are the costs of increasing educational time? In conclusion, research suggests that additional time alone is unlikely to give a major boost to student achievement. Educational policymakers must consider the multiple factors that affect student achievement and work with the community to determine the best combination of reform strategies. Appendices contain a profile of symposium panelists, a list of symposium participants, references, and materials available from the NECTL. (LMI)

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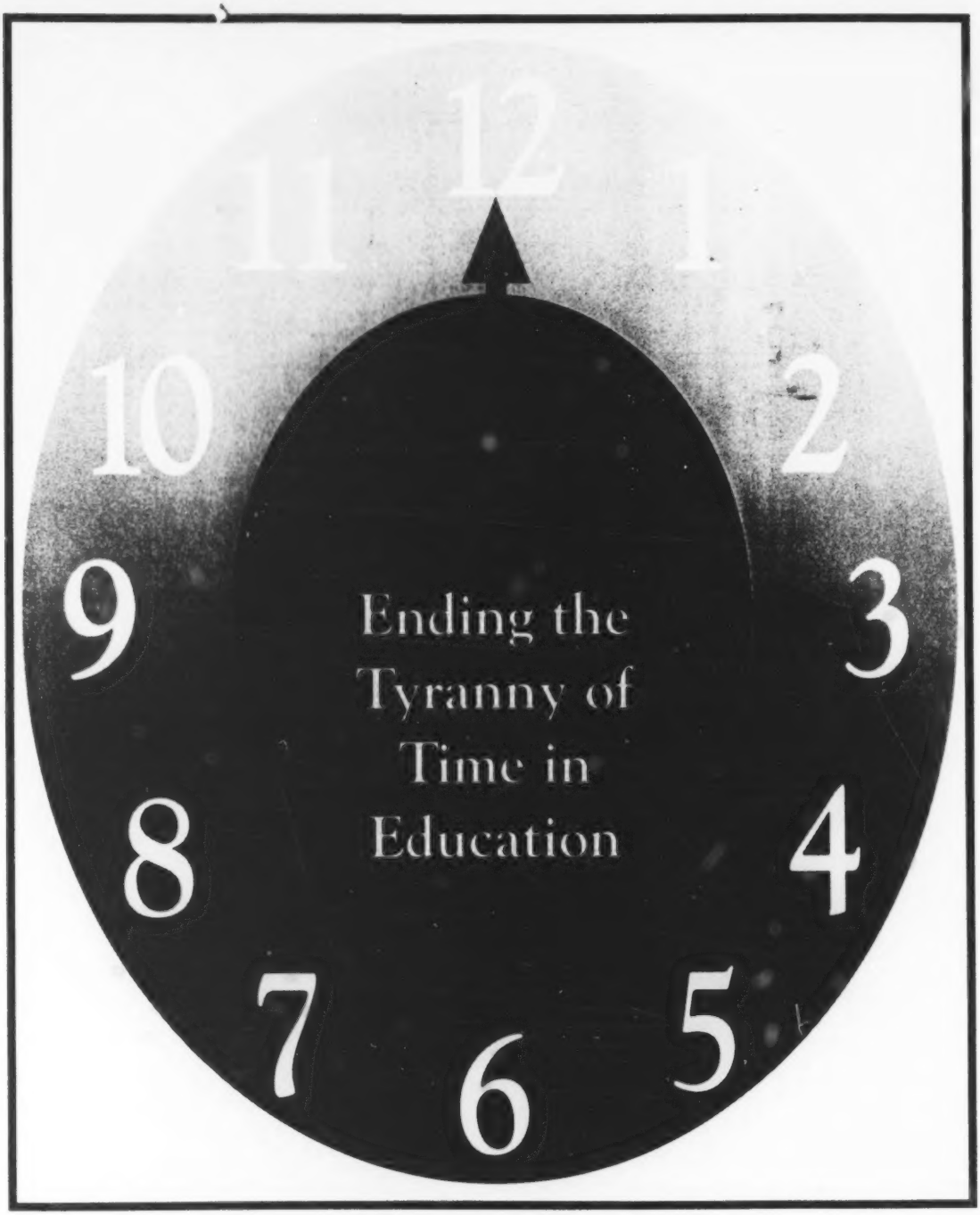

Policy Perspectives on Time and Learning

EA 026 687

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Stop the Clock:

Ending the Tyranny of Time in Education

Policy Perspectives on Time and Learning

Julie Z. Aronson

February 1995

FarWest LABORATORY

Who We Are

Far West Laboratory for Educational Research and Development (FWL), a San Francisco-based nonprofit organization, is one of 10 regional educational laboratories originally created by Congress in 1966. Charged with helping policymakers and educators in California, Utah, Nevada and Arizona improve education, FWL provides the best available knowledge from educational research, development and practice. Funded in part by the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Educational Research and Improvement, the Laboratory also receives support from other government and private contracts and grants.

FWL's Policy Support Program monitors educational trends, synthesizes existing policy research and provides policy analysis to national policymakers, as well as to state and local policymakers and practitioners within the FWL region. The program provides timely, balanced, research-based information through regular *Policy Briefs* and *Policy Updates*; responds to specific information requests from constituents; and produces occasional policy seminars and symposia on topical educational policy issues. For information about the Policy Support Program, contact Lisa Carlos, Senior Policy Analyst; or Julie Aronson, Research Associate at (415) 565-3000.

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Acknowledgements

*I*n response to growing national concern about academic achievement, Congress passed Public Law 102-62, the Education Council Act of 1991, which established the **National Educational Commission on Time and Learning**. The nine-member commission was charged with exploring the relationship between time and learning and making recommendations for how the nation's schools should restructure the use of time to enhance student learning. The Commission's final report, *Prisoners of Time*, provides examples from other developed countries of practices that give students more time for learning both during and after the formal academic day. Drawing from several U.S. schools, the report also provides promising examples for restructuring time with positive results for students and teachers.

This report is based largely on the presentations and discussions at a recent policy symposium held at Far West Laboratory entitled: "Rethinking Time: A Conversation on Systemic Reform." The Policy Support Program thanks Milton Goldberg, Executive Director of the National Education Commission on Time and Learning, for his contributions to the symposium; Far West Laboratory board member Tom Donahoe for his participation on the panel and his help planning the event; former California Department of Education division director Merrill Vargo, Long Beach Unified School District superintendent Carl Cohen, International Studies Academy charter school coordinator and teacher Tom Ruiz and Horace Mann Middle School teacher Terry Kay for their thoughtful presentations and their participation in the afternoon's discussion; FWL executive director Dean Nafziger for moderating the panel discussion and helping the entire event proceed smoothly; and Pete Mesa for so ably moderating a very large and animated afternoon discussion. Thanks are also due FWL staff Beverly Farr, Jennifer Green, Tom Ross, Bonnie Breneman, Ann Wallgren and Mary Dean. Finally, we thank the staff at the National Education Commission on Time and Learning for providing us with materials for the symposium and this report.

The author owes a debt of gratitude to Joy Zimmerman for her helpful suggestions and editing on many drafts of this report, and for making the process both fun and educational. Thanks are also due to Lisa Carlos and Mary Amsler for their comments and guidance, and Freddie Baer for her skillful and patient help with designing and producing this document.

Executive Summary

How much time students should spend in school and how that time should be organized has been debated by educators and policymakers since the beginning of compulsory public education in this country. Over the past dozen years, concern that U.S. students are lagging behind their international counterparts has brought the issue of time and learning once again to the forefront of school reform. That concern has also helped fuel the growing push for national education goals, which, in turn, has led to current efforts in most states to develop standards for what students should know and be able to do.

In this context, educators and policymakers must consider all possible strategies for increasing achievement, among them, restructuring educational time. Throughout the country, schools are experimenting with many different strategies to enhance the amount of time for students to learn, such as year-round education programs and extended school days and years. Yet, while many argue that students simply need more time in school, others believe the U.S. education system is so flawed that increasing the amount of time students spend in school will only increase costs while yielding few, if any, benefits.

This report explores key issues in the debate about restructuring educational time to enhance student learning. Its central framework derives from the presentations and discussion at a symposium conducted last June by the Policy Support Program of Far West Laboratory for Educational Research and Development entitled "Rethinking Time: A Conversation on Systemic Reform." The report also draws on a variety of research to further inform the discussion. These major issues, summarized and augmented by implications for policymakers to consider, are presented below.

1) What are some strategies for restructuring educational time to increase or enhance time for learning?

Each state sets minimum standards for the length of the school day and school year. While virtually all schools manage to meet these minimum time standards, few surpass them. Thus, to increase the amount of time students spend in school, states can, at the very least, raise the minimums. For their part, districts can increase the time available for education by surpassing state-dictated targets.

A number of implementation strategies can be used to expand or enhance the time students spend on learning, including extended-day or -year programs, year-round education programs and reallocation of school time so a larger proportion is devoted to core academic subjects.

Implications for Policymakers

- Districts and schools should determine whether the amount of time currently devoted to instruction in core subject areas is sufficient. One way to ensure that schools consistently provide enough instructional time in core subjects is to institute an "academic day," during which only core subjects are taught.

- To restructure the use of time effectively, as well as to develop curricula aligned with subject-area standards, teachers and schools need access to research findings about which subjects are taught best with what type of schedules.

- Schools and their communities should discuss and experiment with a variety of ways for schools to use time more efficiently and to utilize community resources to extend educational opportunities, including those that occur outside regular school hours.

2) How can educational time be structured so ALL students reach high standards?

If we expect *all* American students to meet high educational standards, schools must be structured around learning instead of time. Under the aegis of Goals 2000 legislation, many states are establishing content and performance standards that will allow students to advance from one level to the next only upon demonstrated competency in a particular subject, not according to how much seat time they have put in.

Implications for Policymakers

- To design meaningful standards and create realistic policy about educational time, policymakers must grapple with how schools can most equitably and productively provide a quality education to all students. This includes developing policies for serving students who need substantially less time than others to master standards, as well as those who need more time. Both school time, per se, and assessment must be considered in light of students' individual needs.

- In developing appropriate assessment systems, educational policymakers must evaluate the degree to which time should be a factor in assessment.

- In the process of determining what standards should be and how mastery is to be evaluated, educational policymakers must consult with all stakeholders — including teachers, parents and students.

3) How can districts and schools support teachers in expanded roles that require additional time?

Our education system simply does not provide teachers with enough time to engage in the full range of non-teaching activities that are essential to successful teaching. Restructuring schools so students can meet national education goals will require giving teachers even more non-teaching time for activities such as developing new curriculum frameworks, assessment systems and teaching strategies; professional development, including learning new teaching methods and adjusting current practices to meet the needs of all students; and meeting with students and their parents.

Implications for Policymakers

- Districts and schools must develop ways to provide teachers with essential non-instructional time without depriving students of needed learning time.

- Teachers should not be expected to do everything. Schools and districts should use any available categorical or restructuring funds to hire other staff to provide needed services for students and their families.

- Teachers must be given opportunities to see what colleagues are doing and to learn about innovative teaching models both within their districts and elsewhere.

- Districts and schools must build parental and community support for teachers' professional development planning time and other important activities. Innovative ways to free teachers for these activities include use of community service days, employing a professional substitute pool and better use of school volunteers.

- To enable teachers to function in their expanded roles and allow schools to significantly restructure the use of time, districts must develop productive, collaborative relationships with teachers' unions. Unions must be an integral part of the planning process for enhancing learning time.

4) How can districts and schools be encouraged to restructure educational time to increase the amount of time for learning?

A number of state-initiated policy mechanisms in California have successfully encouraged districts and schools to restructure and extend the amount of time for learning. California's SB813, for example, resulted in 90 percent of the state's school districts expanding to, or maintaining, a school year five days longer than the 175 day mandated minimum. The ability to apply for waivers of state

education codes has allowed many schools to experiment with innovative practices, including how time is scheduled. Similarly, the SB1274 school restructuring initiative has encouraged many schools to restructure the way existing school time is used, both inside and outside the classroom.

Implications for Policymakers

- To encourage districts and schools to restructure the use of time, states must provide the kinds of policy levers and supports offered in California, including legislation that allows waiver of education codes dictating how school time is structured.

- California's experience with SB813 suggests that, with proper incentives, districts may be willing to enhance their educational programs by allocating a larger portion of existing budgets to instructional activities.

- States must provide technical assistance to districts and schools, including guidance on how to restructure, as well as information about different restructuring models already in use. Districts, in turn, should actively encourage schools to restructure time, providing them with information about various options.

- Schools must "prepare the ground" for restructuring time by bringing students, parents and community members into the planning process for change, enlisting their support and participation in developing strategies for increasing learning time. This is particularly critical if schools are to emphasize core academic subjects over popular extracurricular activities, such as sports.

5) What are the costs of increasing educational time?

The cost of increasing educational time is a major and contentious issue for policymakers and practitioners. Cost estimates vary according to the methods used for extending educational time, as well as how the figures are calculated. Moreover, trying to increase funding for public education at a time when many feel the system needs major reform is politically untenable, especially given the current economic climate.

Implications for Policymakers

- Districts need to consider cost factors when determining how to approach restructuring educational time. If additional funding is not available, districts can explore low- and no-cost options for enhancing educational time, such as multi-track, year-round programs or block scheduling

- California's experience with SB813 demonstrated that increasing education time in schools does not necessarily require dollar-for-dollar state funding; most districts receiving incentive funding have been motivated to reallocate existing funds so as to spend proportionally more on instructional activities.

- Districts and schools must work with parents and others in their communities to develop support for increasing educational time. Once people understand the consequence of failing to provide students with adequate core instruction, they will be more likely to support strategies that make core subject instructional activities a higher priority.

Many educators and policymakers question whether increasing educational time is the most critical educational reform issue or the most cost-effective way to improve students' academic outcomes. In fact, research suggests that additional time alone is unlikely to give a major boost to student achievement, increasing or enhancing instructional time is only one piece of what must be a comprehensive approach to improving the ability of U.S. schools to adequately prepare students for success in the information age with its increasingly global economy. Thus, educational policymakers must continue to consider the multiple factors affecting student achievement and work with the educational community to determine the best combination of reform strategies for improving student outcomes.

Introduction

On June 24, 1994, the Policy Support Program of Far West Laboratory for Educational Research and Development conducted a day-long symposium entitled "Rethinking Time: A Conversation on Systemic Reform." The symposium was designed to coincide with the release of *Prisoners of Time*, the final report of the National Education Commission on Time and Learning, whose mandate was to study the relationship between educational time and student learning in U.S. schools. Far West Laboratory's symposium served as a forum for educational policymakers and practitioners 1) to learn about and discuss the Commission's conclusions and their respective policy implications and 2) to exchange ideas about how time can be restructured to enhance academic learning. The symposium was designed to prompt participants to grapple with the broad range of practical and policy issues that must be addressed when radically changing how schools use time.

Symposium participants included educational policymakers, administrators and practitioners from the Laboratory's four-state region, as well as Chapter 1 administrators from the region and several additional states. Following a presentation by Commission Executive Director Milton Goldberg, who summarized the Commission's conclusions and responded to audience questions and comments, participants heard from five panelists, each representing a different level of educational policy and practice in California. Within the Far West Laboratory region, California has been at the forefront of the systemic reform movement and has used policy levers and supports to promote reconsideration of how schools use time. By focusing on California's experience, the symposium gave participants an opportunity to examine the possibilities for extending and enhancing the use of educational time from a full range of perspectives. The panelists were asked to respond to the Commission's report and share their respective experiences with restructuring educational time. The day concluded with a roundtable discussion among symposium participants and panelists focusing on some of the key issues related to restructuring educational time.

Part I of this report provides background on time and learning, including 1) an historical perspective on concerns about the relation of time and learning, leading up to creation of the Commission, and 2) a listing of the Commission's recommendations, as laid out in *Prisoners of Time*, each followed by a summary written by Far West Laboratory (FWL). Those familiar with the Commission's report may wish to skip immediately to Part II, which discusses key issues and implications for policymakers. This second section provides a synthesis of the main issues raised and discussed at the symposium, augmented, when relevant, by information from reports, papers and research on the relationship of time to learning. This section addresses the following questions:

Key Questions

- What are some common strategies for restructuring educational schedules to increase the amount of time for learning?
- How can educational time be better structured so *all* students can reach high standards?
- How can districts and schools ensure that teachers have adequate time for the non-instructional activities that are essential to successful teaching, such as planning and professional development?
- How can districts and schools be encouraged to restructure educational time to increase the amount of time for learning?
- What are the costs of increasing educational time?

Part I: Background

Historical Interest in the Issue of Educational Time

Since the beginning of compulsory public education in this country, educators and policymakers have debated how much time students should spend in school and how that time should be structured. As U.S. society became increasingly industrialized starting in the mid-1880s, the market economy called for a better educated workforce. The transition from an industrial society to an increasingly technical society in the current age of information increases the need for all students to be well-educated. Over the years, students have been required to spend increasing amounts of time in school. Between the mid-19th and the mid-20th century, the average school year expanded from 12 to 36 weeks.

Yet, while the amount of time students spend in school has been greatly extended, how this time is actually structured has changed very little. The standard September-June school year was initially developed to accommodate an agrarian society where children helped work the farm during summers. It also served to protect students and teachers from the discomfort of sometimes sweltering summer heat in airless school buildings. Although the U.S. has since witnessed the diminishment of its farming sector and the advent of air conditioning, the traditional nine-month school year remains virtually unchanged. Only a small number of U.S. schools have begun experimenting with operation of a regular school program during summer months.

Many studies conclude that U.S. students spend significantly less time engaged in academic activities than their contemporaries abroad.

Over the last dozen years, the issue of time and learning has risen again to the top of U.S. educational policy agenda. One catalyst has been the growing concern that U.S. students are not keeping up academically with their counterparts in many other industrialized nations, particularly our economic competitors like Japan and Germany. In 1983, *A Nation at Risk* focused national attention on these international differences. Numerous studies since then have attempted to discern why American students seem to lag behind, many concluding that our students spend significantly less time engaged in academic activities than do students elsewhere. Such concerns have fueled the growing push for national education goals, which, in turn, has led to current efforts in most states to develop standards for what students should know and be able to do.

In this context, educators and policymakers must consider all possible strategies for increasing achievement, among them, restructuring educational time. Throughout the country, schools are experimenting with many different strategies to enhance the amount of time for students to learn such as year-round education programs and extended school days and years. Yet, while many argue that students simply need more time in school, others believe the U.S. education system is so flawed that increasing the amount of time students spend in school will only increase costs while yielding few, if any, benefits.

Creation of the National Education Commission on Time and Learning

In 1991, the National Education Commission on Time and Learning was established by federal legislation to study the relationship of educational time and student learning. After two years of research which included visiting schools here and abroad; interviewing educators, students and parents; reviewing research and examining a variety of educational practices, the Commission published its final report in May, 1994. *Prisoners of Time* describes the U.S. educational system as having a major "design flaw": in most schools, classes are scheduled as if all subjects required the same amount of learning time and all students learned in the same way and at the same rate. Regardless of subject matter, all classes are allocated the same amount of time, typically 50 minutes. Similarly, students are grouped by age with each one expected to progress through the subject matter at the same pace. In reality, of course, some students fail to master the material in the allotted time while those who can master it more quickly are not adequately challenged.

According to the Commission, students are not the only "prisoners of time." Teachers also struggle in a system that allows too little time for the many non-instructional activities — such as planning, developing curriculum and assessments, and professional development — that are requisite to successful teaching.

Prisoners of Time makes eight broad recommendations for how American schools must restructure and enhance educational time if students are ultimately to meet national education goals and develop the tools needed to compete successfully in an increasingly global economy. Each recommendation, stated below, is followed by a summary prepared by Far West Laboratory.

Commission Recommendations

I. **INVENT SCHOOLS AROUND LEARNING, NOT TIME.** We recommend a commitment to bring every child in the United States to world-class standards in core academic areas.

FWL Summary

The education system must commit to helping every child achieve world-class standards in core academic areas. To do so, schools must be designed around *learning*, not *time*. Students should move ahead according to mastery of content, not amount of seat time. This requires that students' progress be evaluated at regular intervals, using assessments that measure writing, reasoning and analytical skills, as well as mastery of specific content.

II. **FIX THE DESIGN FLAW: USE TIME IN NEW AND BETTER WAYS**. We recommend that state and local boards work with schools to redesign education so that time

becomes a factor supporting learning, not a boundary marking its limits.

FWL Summary

America's education institutions must acknowledge that students learn in different ways and at varying rates, and they must tailor teaching methods accordingly. Schools must be able to schedule time flexibly enough to accommodate appropriate instructional methods and time allotments for individual students and subjects. Such flexibility will allow — indeed, promote — effective and innovative practices, such as block scheduling and interdisciplinary team teaching; better integration of technology; and increased partnership with community-based instructional resources, like libraries and businesses.

Students should be placed in classes not according to age, but to their level of accomplishment in the particular subject. Moreover, high school graduation should depend on meeting high performance standards in key academic subjects, not on seat time or Carnegie units.

III. ESTABLISH AN ACADEMIC DAY. We recommend that schools provide additional academic time by reclaiming the school day for academic instruction.

FWL Summary

American schools should adopt the distinction made in many European countries between the school day and its subset, the academic day. The academic day should be at least 5-1/2 hours long and consist exclusively of core academic subjects. All other activities, such as electives, sports, club meetings and driver's education, should be offered during the remainder of the district's school day or, if necessary, during an extended day. Students needing additional time or instruction in core subjects could also be accommodated during the longer school day. Communities that want schools to offer extracurricular activities, such as sports, will need to advocate for extending the school day and, perhaps, generate additional funding for those activities.

IV. KEEP SCHOOLS OPEN LONGER TO MEET THE NEEDS OF CHILDREN AND COMMUNITIES. We recommend that schools respond to the needs of today's students by remaining open longer during the day and that some schools in every district remain open throughout the year.

FWL Summary

Establishing an academic day almost by definition calls on schools to be open longer to accommodate the many courses and activities that are not part of core academic instruction. If schools are to adequately respond to the many needs of students, their families and the larger school community, that, too, calls for a longer school day and/or year. Due to many societal changes, schools are increasingly called upon to be a center for community services. For example, with increasing numbers of children living in single-parent households or in households where both parents work outside the home, many students need a safe place to go after school where they can do homework or participate in extracurricular activities.

Schools can also collaborate with other community agencies to provide important support services for children and their families, such as immunizations, health screenings, nutritional counseling and mental health programs. Unless this array of services is available to children and their families, it is unlikely that we will achieve the National Education Goal of school readiness: that all children in America will start school ready to learn. Although the services should not be solely, or even largely, financed by education dollars, at least several schools in every district should extend hours of operation so such services can be located on campus and thus be easily accessible to the community.

V. GIVE TEACHERS THE TIME THEY NEED. We recommend that teachers be provided with the professional time and opportunities they need to do their jobs.

FWL Summary

Unlike teachers in many other countries, who have planning and professional development time built into their regular schedules, U.S. teachers are given only a handful of student-free days each year in which to take care of all non-teaching business. In reality, they need substantially more time for the numerous non-instructional activities essential to successful teaching, including developing effective lesson plans; meeting with individual students and parents; meaningful student assessment; professional development; collaborating with colleagues; and observing other teachers demonstrate new strategies. To give teachers more time for these necessary activities, districts

could consider strategies such as extending the contract year, extending the day to provide teachers more non-teaching time, and employing a cadre of full-time substitute teachers who teach classes when the permanent teachers are engaged in other activities.

VI. INVEST IN TECHNOLOGY. We recommend that schools seize on the promise of new technologies to increase productivity, enhance student achievement and expand learning time.

FWL Summary

States should establish special funds to provide grants and low-interest loans to districts so schools can purchase new technologies, such as CD-ROMs, modems and fiber optics. At a minimum, computers can be used to provide efficient record-keeping and communications among teachers, staff and administrators. But, optimally, bringing state-of-the-art technologies into the classroom allows educators to personalize learning so students can move at their own pace. Effective learning technologies also have a demonstrated ability to pique student interest and motivate them to engage more actively in their own education.

VII. DEVELOP LOCAL ACTION PLANS TO TRANSFORM SCHOOLS. We recommend that every district convene local leaders to develop action plans that offer different school options and encourage parents, students and teachers to choose among them.

FWL Summary

Because meaningful, long-lasting educational reform cannot be imposed top-down, all parts of the community must join with the local superintendent and school board to discuss the shape and future of a district's schools. Key stakeholders — including students, parents, teachers, human service agencies, community members and businesses — should discuss their hopes and goals for local education and consider strategies for achieving them. In this way, districts could tailor educational programs and school schedules to meet the range of needs and preferences within a given community. In larger districts, individual schools could even operate on different schedules to further accommodate differing needs within the community.

VIII. SHARE THE RESPONSIBILITY: FINGER POINTING AND EVASION MUST END. We recommend that all of our people shoulder their individual responsibilities to transform learning in America.

FWL Summary

All educational stakeholders must commit to improving education. Instead of focusing on regulation, *government*, whether federal legislators or local school boards, must focus on outcomes, holding schools accountable for student performance. Schools must be free to implement educational programs they believe will enhance student learning. For their part, *colleges and universities* should establish entrance requirements that honor the results of new standards and assessments rather than seat time, and should align teacher education programs accordingly. *Business leaders* should continue to press for education to prepare students with the skills needed for the work world and to actively support reform efforts and partnerships that improve schools. *Teachers, parents and students* must also be actively engaged in school improvement: teachers, by being involved in educational reform efforts and holding students to high standards; parents, by providing the help and support that children need to do well in school; and students, by working hard and taking an active role in their own education.

Part II: Issues and Analysis

Key Questions about the Issue of Time and Learning, with Implications for Policymakers

This section addresses five key questions about the issues raised in *Prisoners of Time* and discussed at the symposium. The following information is drawn not only from symposium presentations and discussions, but from a variety of papers, reports and articles, all referenced in Appendix B. Following the discussion of each question is a distillation of related policy implications.

1) What are some strategies for restructuring educational time to increase or enhance time for learning?

Each state sets minimum standards for the length of the school day and school year. (Table 1 shows, by state, the mandated minimum length of school day and school year.) As *Prisoners of Time* points out, virtually all schools manage to meet the minimum time standards, but very few surpass them. Thus, to increase the amount of time students spend in school, states can, at the very least, raise the minimums. For their part, districts can increase the time available for education by electing to surpass these state-dictated targets.

A number of implementation strategies can be used to expand or enhance the time students spend on learning. Evaluating relative costs and benefits requires distinguishing among the various approaches:

Extended-Day or -Year Programs

Extended-day and extended-year programs actually increase the amount of time students, teachers and administrators spend at school by adding hours to the school day, adding days to the school year or both. While many districts have somehow restructured to increase or enhance educational time, few have chosen to do so by instituting an extended program, most likely because of the high costs of extending personnel contracts — already the biggest portion of the education budget. Moreover, there has been little political or community support for increasing the length of the school day or year. (The issues raised by extended programs are explored further in the section on cost issues.)

Year-Round Education Programs

The most commonly used method for restructuring school time is adoption of a year-round education program. Unlike extended programs, year-round programs stick with the standard length school year — about 180 days in most states. But rather than operating straight through from September to June and then closing for three months of summer vacation, these programs run year-round in shorter blocks of time that are separated by periodic intersessions. One common schedule, for example, is a series of 12-week instructional periods punctuated with four-week intersessions. Depending on their particular needs, students can use these regular breaks for vacation or for remedial or enrichment instruction.

Table 1
State-Mandated Minimum Number of School Days and Hours

State	Number of Hours (Grade Level)	Number of Days
Alabama	6 (K-12)	175
Alaska	4 (K-3); 5 (4-12)	180
Arizona	2 (K); 4 (1-3); 5 (4-6); 6 (7-8); 4 courses (9-12)	175
Arkansas	5.5 (K-12)	180
California	5 (4-8); 6 (9-12)*	180
Colorado	5.5 (1-6); 6 (7-12)	176
Connecticut	4 (K-12)	180
Delaware	6 (K-12)	180
Florida	3 (K); 4 (1-3); 5 (4-12)	180
Georgia	4.5 (1-3); 6 (4-12)	180
Hawaii	6 (K-12)	180
Idaho	4.5 (K-6); 6 (7-12)	177
Illinois	4 (1-2); 5 (2-12)	176
Indiana	5 (1-6); 6 (7-12)	175
Iowa	Local Boards determine	180
Kansas	6 (K-12)	180(1-11); 175(12)
Kentucky	6 (K-12)	185
Louisiana	5 (K-12)	180
Maine	5 (K-12)	180
Maryland	6 (K-12)	180
Massachusetts	5 (1-6); 5.5 (7-12)	180
Michigan	5 (K-12)*	180
Minnesota	2.5 (K); 5 (1-3); 5.5 (4-6); 6 (7-12)	175
Mississippi	5 (K-12)	175
Missouri	3 to 7	174
Montana	2 (K); 4 (1-3); 6 (4-12)	180
Nebraska	Varies - 1032 hrs. (Elementary); 1080 (High School)	
Nevada	4 (1-2); 5 (3-6); 5.5 (7-12)	180
New Hampshire	4.5 (1); 5.25 (2-8); 5.5 (7-12)	180
New Jersey	4 (K-12)	180
New Mexico	2.5 (K); 4.5 (1-3); 5 (4-6); 5.5 (7-12)	180
New York	5 (K-6); 5.5 (7-12)	180
North Carolina	6 (K-12)	180
North Dakota	5.5 (1-6); 6 (7-12)	180
Ohio	5 (K12)	182
Oklahoma	2.5 (K); 5 (1); 6 (2-12)	180
Oregon	450 (K); 810 (1-3); 900 (4-8); 990 (9-12)	annual calendar**
Pennsylvania	2.5 (K); 5 (1-6); 5.5 (7-12)	180
Rhode Island	2.5 (K); 5 (1-6); 5.5 (7-12)	180
South Carolina	6 (K-12)	180
South Dakota	2.5 (K); 4 (1-3); 5.5 (4-12)	175
Tennessee	6.5 (K-12)	180
Texas	5.75 (1-3); 6 (4-12)	175
Utah	2.5 (K); 5.5 (1-6); 150 hrs. per unit of credit (7-12)	180
Vermont	2 (K); 4 (1-2); 5.5 (3-12)	175
Virginia	3 (K); 5.5 (1-12)	180
Washington	2.5 (K); 5 (1-3); 5.5 (4-8); 6 (9-12)	180
West Virginia	2.5 (K); 5.25 (1-4); 5.75 (5-12)	180
Wisconsin	None specified	175
Wyoming	2.5 (K); 5 (1-8); 6 (9-12)	180

* Indicates those states which increase funding to local districts for lengthening the school year.

** Oregon adopted an annual calendar in 1989 based on a minimum number of hours rather than days.

Source: Coley, R., & Goertz, M. (1990). *Educational Standards in the 50 States.* Princeton, NJ: Educational Testing Services

Such programs have several advantages, chief among them, eliminating the "summer of forgetting" that makes it necessary for so many teachers to spend the first months of the new school year reviewing with their students the previous year's curriculum. During the shorter vacations or intersessions students simply retain more of what they learned during their last school session. Also, because the program operates year round, students who need additional instruction can get help during the intersessions and are thus less likely to fall behind. With the more traditional nine month/three month schedule, a student who starts falling behind in autumn often gets no supplemental instruction until the next summer, by which time he may have lost all interest and motivation. By contrast, the periodic intersessions allow students to catch up as they go along, never letting them lag too far behind.

The Commission found that students in Japan, France and Germany spend more than twice as many hours as their U.S. counterparts studying core academic subjects.

Year-round education programs are either *single-track*, with all students following the same schedule of instructional sessions and vacations, or *multi-track*, with different groups of students following staggered schedules so one track is on vacation at any given time.

From a fiscal point of view, multi-track year-round programs offer the additional advantage of allowing a school to accommodate 25 to 50 percent more students in a given academic year because one of the "tracks" is on vacation at any given time. By using existing facilities more efficiently, these programs provide a relatively low-cost solution to overcrowding.

Adopting the Academic Day

Another strategy for increasing or enhancing learning time calls for augmenting the time devoted to core subjects by decreasing the time otherwise devoted to non-core subjects and extracurricular activities. The distinction here between core and non-core subjects is critical; the Commission found that while U.S. students spend no less time in school than many of their international counterparts, they generally receive significantly less instructional time in core subjects. In fact, based on its analysis of instructional time in the final four years of school, the Commission found that students in Japan, France and Germany spend more than twice as many hours as their U.S. counterparts studying core academic subjects.

The Commission recommends that American schools even the field by making a distinction between the "academic day" and the "school day." The academic day is a subset of the total school day, during which students study only core academic subjects, including English and language arts, math, science, civics, geography, history, the arts and foreign languages. All other subjects and activities, such as physical education, home economics, club meetings and sporting events, take place during the remainder of the school day. In this way, non-academic activities do not interfere with instruction in core subjects, guaranteeing that students receive adequate instruction in

essential areas, regardless of the extent of their other activities. Establishing an "academic day" would require many U.S. school districts to extend the school day in order to accommodate the other classes and activities that students want or need.

Allocate Time According to Subject

Equally important is how time is allocated among various core subjects. As noted by the Commission, American schools schedule classes as if all subjects were learned in the same way: all class periods are the same length irrespective of the subject or how it is best taught. As the Commission suggests, more scheduling flexibility would allow teachers to tailor instruction according to subject matter and students' individual learning styles. Block scheduling, for example, allows certain subjects to be taught in longer blocks of time, if warranted. These longer class periods would also more easily facilitate the integration of curriculum by allowing teachers the collaboration time needed to combine subjects. Not incidentally, with longer classroom periods, students change classes fewer times each day, thus minimizing the time wasted between classes.

Although such scheduling alternatives hold great appeal, their impact on learning outcomes needs to be carefully evaluated. Without knowing more about effective course scheduling and related pedagogy, schools risk making changes without any guarantee of better outcomes. Research on how best to allocate time to various subjects and according to students' different learning styles is especially important as schools move to a standards-based educational system. In particular, research is needed on how long it might take students to meet content standards for different subject areas. Because most standards are new or still evolving, schools need realistic guidelines for structuring educational practice to help all students meet them.

Extending Student Education into the Community

As stressed by a number of symposium participants, education shouldn't and doesn't occur exclusively at school or during regular school hours. One way schools can create more student learning time is to collaborate with outside agencies and individuals to provide more community-based learning opportunities for students. For example, the International Studies Academy in San Francisco collaborates with local community organizations to provide a variety of service learning opportunities for its students. Students enrolled in the school's Academy of Finance have internships with private sector firms that relate to what they learn during their formal classes. The school hopes to realize its vision of blurring the distinction between school and community learning opportunities by developing additional partnerships with a variety of businesses, organizations and institutions locally and abroad.

Implications for Policymakers

- Districts, schools and teachers need technical assistance and access to research findings about effective strategies for

increasing learning time in a fashion appropriate to the learning styles of individual students.

- Districts and schools should evaluate how much of the school day is currently devoted to instruction in core subject areas and determine whether it is sufficient. One way to ensure that schools consistently provide enough instructional time is to institute an academic day.

- To restructure the use of time effectively, as well as to develop curricula around subject-area standards, teachers and schools also need access to research findings about which subjects are taught best with what type of schedules. For instance, when teaching a foreign language, is it best to have the class meet for one hour five days a week, or to meet twice weekly for three hours? What type of schedule is most suited to teaching algebra?

- Since block scheduling is a relatively new concept with which few schools have extensive experience, there is a dearth of research about it. Schools that have instituted block schedules should be evaluated. States should promote research in this area and provide research findings, along with models of how various schools have implemented block scheduling, as part of their technical assistance to districts and schools.

- Schools and their communities should discuss and experiment with a variety of ways for schools to use time more efficiently and to utilize community resources to extend educational opportunities, including those that occur outside regular school hours.

If we expect all American students to meet high educational standards, schools must be structured around learning instead of time.

2) How can educational time be structured so *all* students reach high standards?

If we expect *all* American students to meet high educational standards, schools must be structured around learning instead of time. The current system — in which virtually any student can progress through grade levels and graduate from high school if he or she puts in the requisite seat time — is about to undergo a radical change. Under the aegis of Goals 2000 legislation, students in many states will advance from one level to the next only upon demonstrating competency in a particular subject, not according to how much seat time they put in.

Tailoring Time for Individual Students and Subjects

As every educator knows and the Commission's report reiterates, children learn in different ways and at different rates. In practice, this means that to attain educational standards, some students will

require significantly more time than average, while others may require significantly less. If educators are to be held accountable for all students being able to demonstrate mastery of specific content and performance objectives, schools must ensure that each student has adequate time to develop the skills and knowledge required.

Instead, education is currently doled out in prescribed units of time, regardless of the subject area or the learning style and pace of individual students. As a result, some students are left behind, while others quickly master the content and get bored. In this sense, any student who needs either more or less time than average to master content is a "prisoner of time," caught in an education system that fails to offer learning opportunities tailored to individual abilities and learning styles.

Unequal Inputs for Equal Outcomes

As several symposium participants articulated, our nation embraces a concept of equity based on providing equal inputs, irrespective of results. In the realm of education, those inputs are largely measured in units of time. All students are treated as if they had come to school ready to learn and were each equally prepared with a standard set of skills and abilities. "The paradox," says *Prisoners of Time*, "is that the more the school tries to be fair in allocating time, the more unfair the consequences. Providing equal time for students who need more time guarantees unequal results."

Our nation embraces a concept of equity based on providing equal inputs, irrespective of results. In the realm of education, those inputs are largely measured in units of time.

The report argues that a paradigm shift is essential if we want all students to have an equal opportunity to reach national educational goals and performance standards. Schools must be restructured around universal mastery of content and skills, not equal seat time. As one participant suggested, we must become comfortable with the notion of unequal inputs for the sake of more equal results. "What we're up against," she said, "is that while Americans have a fundamental belief that the public school system should provide equal education, in the minds of most people, equal education means equal time. I don't think we've really accepted the notion that we have an obligation to provide unequal inputs in order to get all kids to a high standard."

Dealing with the Academically Precocious Student

While much concern is expressed about students who need more time than others to learn, a number of symposium participants noted that less attention has been paid to students who need significantly less time. In light of emerging content and performance standards for students, policymakers must wrestle with the issue of what to do about students who can demonstrate mastery at relatively young ages. For instance, should they be allowed to graduate, or should they be required to stay in school until a designated age?

Views differ. *Prisoners of Time* suggests that primary and secondary schools should become more like universities, where there are

standards for completion and the amount of time it takes to graduate can vary from a few to many years. One symposium participant agreed, arguing that students who demonstrate mastery at a young age should be free to move on to college. If they are particularly young, she added, they could continue living at home, but take college level courses either through their high school or at a local college.

But others maintain that school is about more than just academics, that it also plays an important role in socialization. A number of symposium participants expressed concern about a 10-year-old student who recently graduated from high school, the implied question being whether it would be developmentally appropriate for a child of that age to spend all day with students eight to 12 years older rather than with peers.

Time and Assessment

If learning time should be scheduled flexibly enough for students to progress at their own pace, what about the time allowed for assessment tasks, such as writing an essay or solving a math problem? The rhetoric of standards-based education — that given adequate instructional support and time, all students should be able to reach educational objectives — fails to address the fact that not all students will be able to *demonstrate* mastery within the same prescribed period of time.

We must somehow find a way to balance the need to give some students additional time on assessment tasks with the need to prepare them realistically for the work world.

The dilemma, of course, is that the rest of society won't always wait for some students to catch up. For example, most standardized tests, such as the SAT, GED and GRE, are designed to be completed in a given amount of time as determined by the test developers. Failing to complete an exam within the allotted time, thereby leaving some questions unanswered, automatically results in a lower score. In short, with standardized tests, as with most jobs and other real life situations, it's not just the *quality* of performance that's important, but its speed or timeliness. In looking to align assessment within a more individually tailored learning environment, decisionmakers must somehow find a way to balance the need to give some students additional time on assessment tasks with the need to prepare them realistically for the work world.

Multiple Methods for Assessing Mastery

Some symposium participants further argued that because students learn not only at different rates but in different fashions, they should also have multiple ways to demonstrate mastery. Someone who communicates better orally than in writing might, for example, be allowed to give an oral presentation instead of writing a report. "We have to think about how to create standards and performance assessments that really accommodate the diversity in our society," suggested one participant. A number of speakers noted that the processes for developing standards and assessments should be inclusive, involving not just policymakers, but students, teachers and parents as well.

Like Learning, Change Takes Time

The successful shift from a time-oriented education system to one based on mastery of content will, itself, require significant time. For starters, teachers, principals and administrators will need time to develop policies and learn practices that support teaching to standards, not seat time. They will need time for professional development to learn how best to accommodate different learning styles. As discussed more in the next section, teachers, especially, need more time to accommodate their expanding roles in standards-based systems and restructured schools.

Implications for Policymakers

- To design meaningful standards and create realistic policy about educational time, policymakers must grapple with how schools can most equitably and productively provide a quality education to all students. This includes developing policies for serving students who need substantially less time than others to master standards. Policymakers will have to agree, for example, whether there should be a minimum age requirement for high school graduation, and if so, what. Similarly, they will need to consider whether students graduating from high school under a certain age should have continuing education requirements (and if so, what) or whether they should be free to do anything they choose.

- In developing appropriate assessment systems, educational policymakers must evaluate the degree to which time should be a factor in assessment. In other words, they must decide whether assessments should measure a student's ability to complete a given task in a prescribed amount of time or strictly assess content mastery, irrespective of the time it takes to demonstrate that mastery.

- To give *all* students the opportunity to reach high standards, policymakers must consider how to fairly assess students who may need more time to complete assessment tasks.

- In the process of determining what standards should be and how mastery is to be evaluated, educational policymakers must consult with stakeholders — including teachers, parents and students. How to solicit, collect and synthesize their input will require careful thought.

Our education system does not provide teachers with enough time to engage in the full range of non-teaching activities that are essential to successful teaching. The system operates as if teachers aren't working unless they are standing at the front of a classroom.

3) How can districts and schools support teachers in expanded roles that require additional time?

Our education system simply does not provide teachers with enough time to engage in the full range of non-teaching activities that are essential to successful teaching. As one symposium participant noted, the system operates as if teachers aren't working unless they

are standing at the front of a classroom. The Commission found that the U.S. lags far behind in this area. Milt Goldberg pointed out, for example, that the typical teacher week in Germany is about 40 hours long, but the teacher spends only about 24 hours actually teaching. The other 16 hours each week are used for non-teaching activities, such as course planning, professional development, working with colleagues, curriculum development, student assessment and conducting student-parent conferences.

The Importance of Non-teaching Activities

Because of the common American perception that teachers aren't working unless they are actually teaching, students, parents and community members are often hostile to the idea of teachers spending time on non-teaching activities. This is particularly true when, as is usually the case, such time is created by giving students the day off or sending them home early. Yet, as noted in the Commission report, restructuring schools so students can meet national education goals will require giving teachers even more non-teaching time: to help develop new curriculum frameworks, assessment systems and teaching strategies; for professional development that includes learning new teaching methods and how to adjust current practices to meet the needs of all students; and for planning cross-curricular courses. In addition, because innovative methods are needed to help students with different learning styles master academic standards, teachers must be given the time and opportunities to see what other teachers, schools and districts are doing.

Districts and schools must develop ways to provide teachers more time away from the classroom without depriving students of needed learning time.

Prisoners of Time and numerous other reports and articles suggest a variety of ways that existing educational time can be used more efficiently, among them, utilizing technology for communication. For example, using e-mail for routine communication between teachers and administrators could save a lot of valuable time typically spent in staff meetings discussing administrative issues.

Likewise, non-essential activities, such as assemblies, club meetings and sporting events, can be minimized, relegated to an after-school time or staffed by non-teaching personnel to prevent teachers from losing valuable classroom and planning time. Such time-saving strategies are all the more important when schools are undergoing restructuring and teachers must work substantially longer days to plan and manage restructuring. For example, according to symposium panelist Terry Kay, during restructuring at San Francisco's Horace Mann Middle School, its teachers have been conducting research, writing grants and attending numerous meetings for planning and site governance, in addition to their traditional teaching and planning activities. Incorporating such additional time-consuming activities into teachers' already packed schedules adds immense stress, may make teachers less effective and can engender a sense of hopelessness.

The Role of Unions

Teachers shouldn't be expected to do everything. Schools and districts should use any available categorical or restructuring funds to hire other staff to provide various services for students and their families.

Symposium participants raised the issue of how teachers' unions deal with the changing teacher roles. Some described unions as an obstacle to change because of their traditional commitment to protecting teachers from any tasks or hours not specified in their collective bargaining agreements. Carl Cohn observed that systemic reform is caught in what he describes as a "triangular vice of bureaucracy," the corners of the triangle consisting of several entrenched systems: the state education department and legislature; the school district; and the teachers' unions. Systemic reform, he said, requires that all three bureaucracies find new roles for themselves, a task with which the unions have been less successful than the others, he added. As an example, he explained how in his district the teachers' union is threatening to grieve a school site council's suggested schedule change because the council has not gone through the contract waiver requirement which necessitates a two-thirds rather than a simple majority vote.

Other participants offered examples of more productive union/district relationships. Regarding the San Francisco Unified School District, for example, two participants — one a union activist and the other a high level district administrator — agreed that the District's restructuring efforts have been successful in large part due to the strong, collaborative relationship established between the teachers' unions and the district superintendent's office. Panelist Tom Ruiz had, in fact, served as the first District/Union Coordinator for Restructuring, a position created and jointly funded by the local teachers' unions and the District.

Implications for Policymakers

To enable teachers to function in their expanded roles and allow schools to significantly restructure the use of time, districts must develop productive, collaborative relationships with teachers' unions.

- Teachers need adequate student-free time for planning and professional development activities. However, as the Commission warns, this should not be done at the expense of student learning time. Districts and schools must develop ways to provide teachers more time away from the classroom without depriving students of needed learning time. The Commission suggested that districts establish a dedicated pool of professional substitute teachers who conduct lessons when permanent teachers are engaged in necessary non-teaching activities. Another possible strategy is utilizing parents, volunteers or other community resources to provide alternative learning activities for students while teachers are engaged in other professional activities. Districts should involve teachers in developing innovative ways to structure schedules that include adequate time for non-teaching activities.

- Teachers shouldn't be expected to do everything. Schools and districts should use any available categorical or restructuring funds to hire other staff to provide various services for students and their families. At Horace Mann, for example,

SB1274 (School Restructuring) grant money was used to hire a social worker who provides and brokers services for students on campus, thus relieving teachers of having to minister to the social needs of students.

- Teachers must be given the opportunity to visit colleagues in their own and other districts, to see what others are doing and learn about innovative teaching models.

- Districts and schools must build parental and community support for teachers' professional development and other important activities. Similar support must be developed for innovative ways to increase teachers' planning time, such as use of community service days, a professional substitute pool and better use of school volunteers.

- To enable teachers to function in their expanded roles and allow schools to significantly restructure the use of time, districts must develop productive, collaborative relationships with teachers' unions. Because changing teachers' roles may require significant changes in schedules and work hours, unions will need to be flexible in developing collective bargaining agreements. By the same token, district offices must deal fairly with the unions and be willing to make substantial concessions. For example, teachers cannot be expected to work increasing hours without compensation. Both unions and school districts must be willing to transcend their traditionally adversarial relationship in order to engage cooperatively in the planning process for enhancing educational time and to work together in the best interest of the teachers and students.

Although California's incentive funding — now at about $100 per student annually — is considerably less than the cost of providing the longer day or year, the initiative has proved tremendously successful.

4) How can districts and schools be encouraged to restructure educational time to increase the amount of time for learning?

Making more time for learning is "the hardest nut to crack," said Goldberg, who describes the standard school schedule in the U.S. as "intractable." No matter where one looks, or whether a particular district is rural or urban, the school schedule is invariably the same: a nine-month, Fall-through-Spring school year of approximately 180, five-to-six hour days. Goldberg noted that in 1983, when the U.S. Commission on Excellence in Education — for which he served as executive director — published *A Nation at Risk*, it gave rise to a period of active educational reform efforts. Yet one of its most important recommendations — providing more time for student learning — seemed to fall largely on deaf ears.

Policy Levers and Supports

In fact, California was one of the few states to heed that call. According to Merrill Vargo who, at the time of the symposium, was a division director in the California Department of Education, the adoption in 1983 of Senate Bill 813 was a major step in the state's response to the national movement to reform education. Among other things, SB813 provided incentive funding to school districts willing to lengthen the school day or year. School districts willing to surpass the state-mandated minimum of 175 days and operate for at least 180 days — the target figure — would receive an additional $35 per ADA annually. Districts that increased daily instructional time to meet state goals would receive similar incentive payments. Vargo noted that, although the amount of incentive funding — now at about $100 per student annually — is considerably less than the cost of providing the longer day or year, the initiative has proved tremendously successful. In 1983, 90 percent of the state's school districts were below the target figure of 180 days per year; today, virtually all districts operate a school year of 180 days or more.

Having waiver authority, however, does not necessarily translate into receiving a deluge of waiver requests. . . . Braced for hundreds of expected applications, the CDE was surprised to receive only two.

Vargo said incentive funding has been a very cost effective policy lever for getting so many schools across the state to increase educational time. A study by the California Tax Foundation revealed that almost every district responded by increasing (or maintaining) the amount of instructional time needed to qualify for the incentive funding. Moreover, another study showed that for every dollar of incentive funding a district received, it increased spending on instruction by two dollars (Picus, 1991), thereby increasing the share of total expenditures devoted to instruction. This demonstrates the effectiveness of incentive funding as a state-level strategy to induce districts to make instructional programs a higher budgetary priority.

Vargo described California's SB1274, the school restructuring initiative, as another effective policy mechanism for getting schools to increase the amount of educational time for students. While the legislation was not specifically designed to get schools to change the way time is used or increase the length of the school day or school year, schools that receive SB1274 funds have been encouraged to rethink how their school day is spent. Currently, about 60 percent of the 147 schools receiving SB1274 funds claim to be restructuring the use of school time. According to Vargo, "the CDE is encouraged that a year and a half into a major grant period we have this number of schools doing something in regard to reorganizing, rethinking and rearranging their school day."

Waivers Sound Good but are Underutilized

Another way states can encourage districts and schools to restructure time is by allowing them to apply for state education code waivers. In California, schools can request a waiver for anything in the education code, including how instructional time is used. Some schools have, for example, applied for waivers that would allow them to schedule pupil-free planning time in creative ways that

minimizing the disruption of students' educational time. For instance, instead of using the full allotment of pupil-free days in whole day increments, some schools have been granted permission to use them in smaller increments, half-days, perhaps. This way schools can be in session all day, but for part of that day, students can be in assemblies or other structured activities staffed by non-teaching personnel while teachers plan.

No matter how effective a particular time-enhancing strategy might be, without strong support from the people most affected, it will likely meet opposition from those defending the status quo.

Having waiver authority, however, does not necessarily translate into receiving a deluge of waiver requests. Vargo said the California Department of Education discovered this soon after receiving waiver authority back in 1988. Braced for hundreds of expected applications, the CDE was surprised to receive only two. Even now, during a "good" month, the CDE receives only six to eight waiver requests — many fewer than originally anticipated. This experience is consistent with Carl Cohn's in Long Beach where the district's principals expressed a desire to be free of the bureaucracy, yet failed to apply for waivers or develop charter school proposals.

A number of symposium participants offered theories about why so few schools have applied for waivers. One theory is that the waiver application process is overly cumbersome and must be simplified if schools are going to develop and submit applications. Others argue that it is only a myth that the process is overly cumbersome, but the mythology has the same impact of discouraging schools from applying. Another theory holds that schools have not been receiving adequate district assistance in making the applications and getting through the process. Some claim that schools and districts *both* need technical assistance from the state. Finally, one symposium participant cynically suggested that schools don't apply for waivers because teachers and administrators are not truly interested in making fundamental changes in how schools operate.

Developing a Critical Mass

While the policy levers and supports Vargo described have been effective in encouraging a lot of schools to increase instructional time, not all schools have signed on. Vargo expressed hope that the growing restructuring movement will provide impetus for additional schools to begin creating more educational time especially for those students in need of extra help. CDE's strategy with SB1274 is to fund a group of leadership schools that will invent and test strategies — including the more efficient use of instructional time — which other schools can then adopt or adapt. For example, only two years ago, block scheduling was virtually unheard of in California's high schools, according to Vargo. Yet, today, because several schools took the lead, a significant number of the restructuring high schools are at least in the negotiating stage of implementing some type of block schedule.

Preparing the Ground for New Policies

Schools must "prepare the ground" for restructuring time by bringing students, parents and community members into the planning process for change.

No matter how effective a particular time-enhancing strategy might be, without strong support from the people most affected, it will likely meet opposition from those defending the status quo. Developing and effectively implementing a plan for increasing or enhancing educational time requires the full support of students, parents and the community. An interesting example comes from an elementary school in Hawaii that encountered parental opposition when it proposed to create more teacher planning time by instituting a modified teaching schedule. Initial public opinion interpreted the proposal for a four-day teaching week (with students engaged in enrichment activities on the fifth day) as teachers wanting to work less. A door-to-door communication campaign launched by several parents was effective in developing parental and community support for the school's efforts to provide teachers with needed planning and professional development activities.

As FWL board member Tom Donahoe puts it, the educational community must "prepare the ground" by building support among key stakeholders and bringing them into the school improvement process. Otherwise, educational reform efforts to increase time for teachers to teach and students to learn will founder the way many other well-intentioned school improvement efforts have in the past, discarded as a "fad" due to lack of understanding of, or belief, in the goal for which they were instituted.

Implications for Policymakers:

- To encourage districts and schools to restructure the use of time, states must provide the kinds of policy levers and supports offered in California. One important part of the strategy is the creation and effective implementation of mechanisms for waiving state education codes, particularly those pertaining to how school time is structured.

- Because meaningful systemic change is time-consuming and expensive, states need to provide financial incentives to support districts and schools in their efforts. California's experience with SB813 suggests that, with proper incentives, districts may be willing to enhance their educational programs by allocating a larger portion of their total budgets to instructional activities.

- States must provide technical assistance to districts and schools, including guidance on how to restructure and information about different restructuring models already in use.

- Districts, in turn, should actively encourage schools to restructure time, providing them with information about various strategies and models used by other schools, both within the district and elsewhere. They can also provide time

Goldberg suggests that the educational community and its stakeholders determine educational priorities and then allocate funding accordingly.

and funding for school staff to visit one another to learn about promising strategies for restructuring time. If a waiver process exists, districts can assist schools by helping them develop waiver applications and following up on applications once submitted. Districts can also support schools by developing strong relationships with teachers' unions.

- California's experience with the waiver process should prompt an examination of why relatively few schools have applied for waivers. Understanding the reasons would help policymakers determine more effective strategies for encouraging and, perhaps, assisting districts and schools to restructure time.

- Schools must "prepare the ground" for restructuring time by bringing students, parents and community members into the planning process for change, enlisting their support and participation in developing strategies for increasing learning time. This is particularly critical if schools are to emphasize core academic subjects over popular extracurricular activities, such as sports.

5) What are the costs of increasing educational time?

The cost of increasing educational time is a major and contentious issue for educational policymakers and practitioners; and symposium participants represented a range of viewpoints on the issue.

Several participants questioned the notion of spending more money to increase educational time when the schools are in such need of other types of reform. They expressed the belief that without major reform prior to increasing educational time, taxpayers would simply be "buying more mediocrity." Others suggested that instead of increasing funding and hoping for improvement, schools be rewarded with additional funds only after demonstrating that they can produce good outcomes.

Acknowledging that the public would object to increasing time by simply paying for more of the same, Goldberg said the Commission felt strongly that extending learning time must go hand in hand with other kinds of school improvement efforts.

Cost Estimates Vary Widely

Cost estimates for increasing learning time vary widely, according to the approach taken and who is developing the cost estimate. Without a doubt, increasing the number of days in the school year or the length of the school day would be expensive. The largest expense would be personnel costs, with teachers and administrators working more or longer days. Operating school buildings for longer periods

would also add to the expense, with costs for increased maintenance, utilities and supplies, as well as capital depreciation.

A cost estimate prepared for the Commission determined that increasing the school year to 200 days and the school day to 7 hours for all K-12 grade students nationwide would cost between $34.4 and $41.9 billion a year (Picus, 1993). Using data from the National Education Association and the Education Commission of the States, the National Association for Year-Round Education estimated, by state, the costs of lengthening the school term. Figures range from a low of $2.3 million for North Dakota to a high of $121.4 million for California.

Increased Costs Politically Untenable

Given the current climate, with federal and state budgets tight and little political support for vast increases in education spending, it is unlikely that legislation to increase school funding could get very far. Symposium participant Mike Kjar, a legislative analyst from Utah, said a bill introduced in his state last year to increase the academic year for some schools to 220 days was quickly defeated. As he explains it, legislators felt it made no sense to try to lengthen the year for some schools because it was an expenditure the public would not support. Others at the symposium echoed this sentiment, arguing that, given its costs, increasing educational time was politically untenable at this time.

Reprioritizing with Zero-based Budgeting

However, that position assumes present budget allocations would remain constant. The above estimates are based on each state's average daily per pupil costs multiplied by the number of extra days to be added. Goldberg cautioned against cost estimates figured in this fashion. Rather than working with the existing budget and simply adding to it, he said, what's necessary is to develop a new budget from scratch. He suggests that the educational community and its stakeholders determine educational priorities and then allocate funding accordingly. In the Commission's view, for example, priority should be placed on funding a full academic day consisting of core academic subjects. Other activities, such as sports, should be lower priority and constitute a relatively smaller portion of the budget or be funded entirely through other sources.

Built-in Savings

As discussed in previous sections, time can be restructured in a variety of ways that do not involve extending the number of hours per day or days per year. Obviously, restructuring without actually adding more time would cost less than adopting an extended program with its extensive additional personnel costs. A multi-track year-round program is even more cost efficient because, since one track of students is on vacation at any given time, the program can accommodate up to 50 percent more students in the same building. This means that as the community grows, districts can postpone building or opening additional schools or hiring additional staff.

Although the exact savings are difficult to quantify, both year-round and extended year programs are more efficient than the traditional nine month/three month schedule because they eliminate or minimize the need for the weeks of academic review following a long summer vacation.

Savings issues notwithstanding, some symposium participants argued that plenty of money could be made available to increase school time if our society were to make education a higher priority. As mentioned earlier, any kind of broad-based school restructuring, particularly if requiring increased spending, needs broad support from both school staff and the community.

Implications for Policymakers

- Districts need to consider cost factors when determining what approach or approaches to take in restructuring educational time. If additional funding is not available, district personnel can consider low- and no-cost options for enhancing educational time, such as multi-track year-round programs or block scheduling

Parents and communities must understand the consequence of failing to provide adequate core instruction for students: students who are ill-prepared for jobs in the 21st century and a country that can't compete in the global economy.

- As noted in the previous section, California's experience with SB813 demonstrated that increasing education time in schools does not necessarily require dollar-for-dollar state funding because most districts receiving incentive funding have been motivated to reallocate their budgets so as to spend proportionally more on instructional activities.

- Districts and schools must work with parents and their communities to develop support for increasing educational time. Parents and communities must understand the consequence of failing to provide adequate core instruction for students: students who are ill-prepared for jobs in the 21st century and a country that can't compete in the global economy. Once they do, they will be more likely to support strategies that make core subject instructional activities a higher priority, even if it means shifting resources from non-core instruction — sports and other extra-curricular activities.

- Once committed to the cause, whole communities can be enlisted to support schools by raising funds for sports and other activities, thus freeing up more of the existing funds for academic instruction. In addition, parents and community members can be asked to contribute both human and material resources to their local schools. Such contributions can range from volunteering for classroom tutoring, to arranging for donations of technology and related technical assistance, to inviting classes to a workplace for off-site instruction.

Conclusion

Many educators and policymakers question whether increasing educational time is the most critical educational reform issue or the most cost-effective way to improve students' academic outcomes. According to a summary of existing research on the influence of allocated time on student achievement, the majority of studies conclude that considerable increases in the amount of instructional time would be needed to even moderately increase student achievement (Nelson, 1990 as referenced in Copple, et. al., 1992). A number of studies indicate that how students spend their non-school hours may be as important, or even more important, in explaining why American students lag behind their international counterparts. For example, international comparisons demonstrate that students in the United States spend much less time doing homework than students in many other nations (IAEP, 1992, as described in Copple, et. al., 1992). Similarly, students in the United States typically spend a great deal of time watching television, an activity linked to poorer academic performance. For example, a study done by the National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP, 1990) showed that 13 and 17 year old students who watched more television demonstrated lower mathematics proficiency. Additionally, American students may be less motivated to learn, perhaps because the link between school performance and future work opportunities is weaker in the U.S. than in some other countries (Bishop, 1989, as described in Copple, et. al.).

A number of studies indicate that how students spend their non-school hours may be as important, or even more important, in explaining why American students lag behind their international counterparts.

Increasing or enhancing instructional time is only one piece of the comprehensive approach required to improve the ability of U.S. schools to adequately prepare students for success in the age of information and in an increasingly global economy. Given that additional time alone is unlikely to give a major boost to student achievement, educational policymakers must continue to consider the multiple factors affecting student achievement and work with the educational community to determine the best strategies for improving student outcomes. A comprehensive approach might include instilling a greater cultural value on education, as well as establishing policies that provide explicit rewards for doing well in school, for example, rewarding hard working students with good employment opportunities.

Appendix A:

Profiles of Symposium Panelists

***Milton Goldberg**, the executive director of the National Education Commission on Time and Learning, is a former teacher and school administrator. He has served as the Director for the Office of Research in the U.S. Department of Education. Mr. Goldberg was also the executive director of the National Commission on Excellence in Education which in 1983 published the landmark report "A Nation at Risk".*

***Merrill Vargo** was, until recently, Director of Regional Programs and Special Projects at the California Department of Education (CDE) with responsibilities for a number of areas that relate directly to the issue of how schools organize and use their time. She was responsible for the Charter Schools program in California and the state's restructuring program (SB1274). In her CDE capacity, Vargo also served as a member of the Far West Laboratory Board of Directors. Vargo is now Director of the Bay Area School Reform Collaborative.*

***Carl Cohn** is the superintendent of the Long Beach Unified School District, which, with some 78,000 students, is one of the nation's largest school districts. A number of elementary and middle schools in the district have recently adopted year-round schedules. This past fall, Long Beach became the first district in the nation to require all elementary and middle school students to wear uniforms.*

***Tom Donahoe** is a member of the San Francisco business community and is currently the Corporate Communications and Contributions Advisor to U.S. Leasing in San Francisco. A member of the Far West Laboratory Board of Directors, Mr. Donahoe has for several years been working in and writing about the field of school improvement. He has a special interest in rethinking the use of time in schools; the December 1993 edition of the Phi Delta Kappan featured an article Mr. Donahoe authored entitled "Finding the Way: Structure, Time, and Culture in School Improvement."*

***Terry Kay** is an eighth grade bilingual (Spanish) teacher at the Horace Mann Middle School in San Francisco, where she has taught for nine years. As a consent decree school, Horace Mann has undergone restructuring as part of a desegregation court order. It is also a Project 2161 School, the national program focuses on math and science education by having students grapple with real life problems. Within California, Horace Mann is part of the SB1274 statewide restructuring program. Ms. Kay is a member of the steering committee of the school, as well as a member of the Horace Mann community council and chair of the social studies department.*

***Tom Ruiz** is a teacher of Geography and International Relations at the International Studies Academy (ISA) in San Francisco's Potrero Hill neighborhood. The ISA is the San Francisco Unified School District's first charter school and the first urban charter high school in California. Mr. Ruiz serves as ISA's Charter Coordinator and as one of 5 staff representatives on ISA's 15-member governing body, the ISA Charter Council. Previous to working at ISA, Mr. Ruiz served as the first District/Union Coordinator for Restructuring, a jointly-funded position created by the SFUSD and the United Educators of San Francisco.*

Appendix B:

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Paul Hood,
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Senior Associate, FWL Communications and Marketing

Appendix C:

References and Further Readings

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Appendix D:

Materials Available from the National Education Commission on Time and Learning

Prisoners of Time, the official final report of the Commission, is a compilation of findings, recommendations and practices that reflect new thinking about time and learning. Included are the eight recommendations that simultaneously attack the problems facing our schools, as well as brief examples of schools that have put the recommendations into practice. 56 pages. $6.75.

Prisoners of Time: Schools and Programs Making Time Work for Students and Teachers, provides nearly 40 examples of innovative programs supported by schools, school districts or non-school partners, which have experimented with time schedules, and calendars to make better use of available time and extend the amount of time students spend learning. These programs are but a sampling of many public and private school efforts — from preschool through grade 12 — across the United States. 58 pages. $6.75.

Prisoners of Time: What We Know and What We Need To Know, summarizes the key research reviewed by the Commission members as they developed their report. It also suggests some important questions which demand further investigation because too little information is available to answer them. Knowledge acquired through research — that which is now available and that which has yet to be done — can greatly assist American schools and school districts to raise the quality of learning for all children. 60 pages. $6.75.

Prisoners of Time Video, is a 12-minute video that provides both a report summary and practical examples of schools putting the recommendations to work in rural, suburban, and urban settings. Discussion involves students, teachers, administrators, parents and community members. $12.50.

For information on how to order any of the above materials, contact the Time and Learning Information Services (TaLIS) at:

Time and Learning Information Services (TaLIS)
1700 North Moore Street, Suite 1250
Arlington, VA 22209
Tel: (800) 299-5486
Fax: (703) 243-0496